

REMARKS

The Official Action of January 25, 2006, and the prior art cited and relied upon therein have been carefully studied. The claims in the application are now claims 1 and 5-20, and these claims define patentable subject matter warranting their allowance. Favorable reconsideration and such allowance are respectfully urged.

Claims 2, 3 and 4 have been canceled and new independent claim 14 added. Claims 1 and 5-20 remain in the application for consideration.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for his indication that claims 4-12 are allowable subject to being rewritten in independent form. In response, Applicant has added new independent claim 14 which combines the features of claim 1 and allowable claim 4 and dependent claims 15-20 which correspond to original claims 5-10. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 14-20 are now allowable.

The examiner has rejected claims 1-3 and 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Cunningham '289 in view of Schmidt, du Quesne, Feldman or Wuesthoff. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection as applied to independent claim 1 as amended.

The claimed positioner (20) is located between one of the clamping jaws and the claimed actuator. These elements act together to position each of the clamping jaws at the same time and are operated independently from positioners located on the other clamping jaws. In comparison, each of the Cunningham positioners modify only the working portion of the clamping jaw on which it is engaged.

Further, each of the claimed clamping jaws are in respective abutting engagement in the slots in the claimed plate. In comparison, the Cunningham clamping jaws 10 shown in Fig. 5 illustrated in the Examiner's Office Action are slidably mounted on a clamp carrier 21 which is fixed on table II (see col., lines 45-52 and Fig. 4 of Cunningham).

Finally, Applicant finds no teaching whatever in Schmidt, du Quesne, Feldman or Wuesthoff of the structural features of the claimed linking means which moves all of their clamping jaws together equidistant from the central axis of their plate by an actuator and a positioner engaged between the actuator and at least one of the clamping jaws.

The prior art documents made of record and not relied upon have been noted along with the implication that such documents are deemed by the PTO to be insufficiently

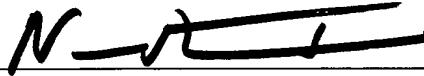
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pertinent to warrant their applications against any of  
applicant's claims.

Favorable reconsideration and allowance are  
earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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